

**Listing of Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Currently amended) The printing plate precursor of claim 11 46, wherein crosslinking reactions of the crosslinkable polymer are independent of crosslinking actions of the thermally active crosslinking metal salt.
3. (Currently amended) The printing plate precursor of claim 11 46, wherein crosslinking reactions of the crosslinkable polymer are interdependent on crosslinking actions of the thermally active crosslinking metal salt.
4. (Previously presented) The printing plate precursor of claim 11, wherein the crosslinkable polymer comprises a polymer derived from an ethylenically unsaturated monomer.
5. (Previously presented) The printing plate precursor of claim 11, wherein the crosslinkable polymer comprises a polymer derived from at least one ethylenically unsaturated monomer selected from the group consisting of (meth)acrylic acid, butyl (meth)acrylate, cyclohexyl (meth)acrylate, ethylhexyl (meth)acrylate, benzyl (meth)acrylate, furfuryl (meth)acrylate, ethoxyethyl (meth)acrylate, tricyclodecanyloxy (meth)acrylate, nonylphenyloxyethyl (meth)acrylate, hexanediol (meth)acrylate, 1,3-dioxolane (meth)acrylate, hexanediol di(meth)acrylate, butanediol di(meth)acrylate, neopentyl glycol di(meth)acrylate, polyethylene glycol di(meth)acrylate, isobornyl(meth)acrylate, tricyclodecanedimethylol di(meth)acrylate, tripropylene glycol di(meth)acrylate, bisphenol-A di(meth)acrylate, pentaerythritol tri(meth)acrylate, dipentaerythritol hexa(meth)acrylate, dipentaerythritol caprolactone adduct hexa(meth)acrylate, trimethylolpropane tri(meth)acrylate, trimethylolpropane propylene oxide adduct tri(meth)acrylate, polyoxyethylated bisphenol-A di(meth)acrylate, polyester (meth)acrylate, polyurethane (meth)acrylate, and acetoacetoxymethyl (meth)acrylate.

6. (Previously presented) The printing plate precursor of claim 11, wherein the crosslinkable polymer comprises at least one of a poly (meth) acrylic acid and a saccharide.
7. (Previously presented) The printing plate precursor of claim 11, wherein the crosslinkable polymer comprises at least one of a poly (meth)acrylic acid and chitosan.
8. (Previously presented) The printing plate precursor of claim 11, wherein the thermally active crosslinking metal salt is selected from at least one of the following groups: metal salts of sulfamide, sulfanylamide, acetosulfamine, sulfathiazole, sulfadiazine, sulfamerazine, sulfamethoxazole, sulfamethazine, sulfaisoxazole, homosulfamine, sulfisomidine, sulfaguanidine, sulfamethizole, sulfapyridine, phthalisosulfathiazole, succinylsulfathiazole, amino-mercapto-thiadiazole, benzothiazole, benzimidazole, fatty acids, and complexed metal salts.
9. (Cancelled)
10. (Previously presented) The printing plate precursor of claim 11, wherein the overcoat layer comprises at least one saccharide.
11. (Previously presented) A printing plate precursor comprising a substrate having coated thereon in the following order:
  - (a) a hydrophilic layer comprising a mixture of a crosslinkable polymer and a thermally active crosslinking metal salt, and
  - (b) an overcoat elutable in aqueous media,  
the hydrophilic layer capable of becoming less hydrophilic upon exposure to radiation that effects crosslinking in the layer,  
wherein the overcoat layer comprises an aqueous-soluble organic polymer, chitosan and an infrared-absorbing dye.
12. (Previously presented) The printing plate precursor of claim 11, wherein the infrared-absorbing dye is an aqueous-soluble infrared-absorbing dye.
13. (Cancelled)
14. (Previously presented) The printing plate precursor of claim 11, wherein the substrate is a flat sheet, a sleeve or a printing cylinder.

15. (cancelled)
16. (cancelled)
17. (currently amended) The printing plate precursor composition of claim 11 16, wherein the crosslinkable hydrophilic polymer is selected from at least one of the following classes:
  - (a) thermosetting phenolic resins,
  - (b) thermoset polyimide resins,
  - (c) thermoset epoxides or epoxy resins,
  - (d) thermoset polyester resins,
  - (e) thermoset polyurethanes,
  - (f) thermoset urea resins,
  - (g) thermoset melamine resins,
  - (h) thermoset furan resins, and
  - (i) thermoset vinyl ester resins.

18.-22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously presented) A heat-sensitive composition comprising:
  - (a) a crosslinkable hydrophilic polymer;
  - (b) a thermally active crosslinking metal salt;
  - (c) an infrared radiation-sensitive dye that is soluble in a solvent, the solvent being at least one of water and a water-miscible organic solvent, the infrared-sensitive dye having maximum absorption at wavelengths greater than 700 nm as measured in the solvent, wherein the thermally active crosslinking metal salt comprises silver 2-mercapto-5-amino-1,2,4-thiadiazole.
24. (cancelled)
25. (Previously presented) A method of imaging comprising the steps of:
  - (a) providing a printing plate precursor comprising a substrate having coated thereon:
    - (i) a hydrophilic layer comprising a mixture of a crosslinkable polymer and a thermally active crosslinking metal salt, the hydrophilic layer capable of becoming less hydrophilic upon exposure to radiation that effects crosslinking in the layer; and

(ii) an overcoat layer, the overcoat layer comprising an aqueous-soluble organic polymer, chitosan and an infrared-absorbing dye and the overcoat layer elutable in aqueous media; and

(b) imagewise exposing said printing plate precursor to provide exposed and unexposed areas in the hydrophilic layer of said printing plate precursor, whereby the exposed areas are rendered less hydrophilic than the unexposed areas by heat provided by the imagewise exposing.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein said imagewise exposing is carried out using one of an infrared radiation emitting laser and an infrared radiation emitting laser array.

27. (Currently amended) A method of making a printing plate comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a printing plate precursor, the precursor comprising a substrate having coated thereon a heat-sensitive composition comprising:

(i) a crosslinkable hydrophilic polymer;

(ii) a thermally active crosslinking metal salt;

(iii) an infrared radiation-sensitive dye that is soluble in a solvent, the solvent being at least one of water and a water-miscible organic solvent, the infrared-sensitive dye having maximum absorption at wavelengths greater than 700 nm as measured in the solvent;

the printing plate precursor having disposed over said heat-sensitive composition, an overcoat layer comprising an aqueous-soluble organic polymer and chitosan, the overcoat layer being elutable in aqueous solvent,

(b) imagewise exposing said printing plate precursor to provide exposed and unexposed areas of the heat-sensitive composition, whereby the exposed areas are rendered less hydrophilic than the unexposed areas by heat provided by the imagewise exposing; and

(c) bringing the printing plate precursor into contact with at least one lithographic printing ink and fountain solution.

28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 27 wherein bringing the printing plate precursor into contact is performed on-press.